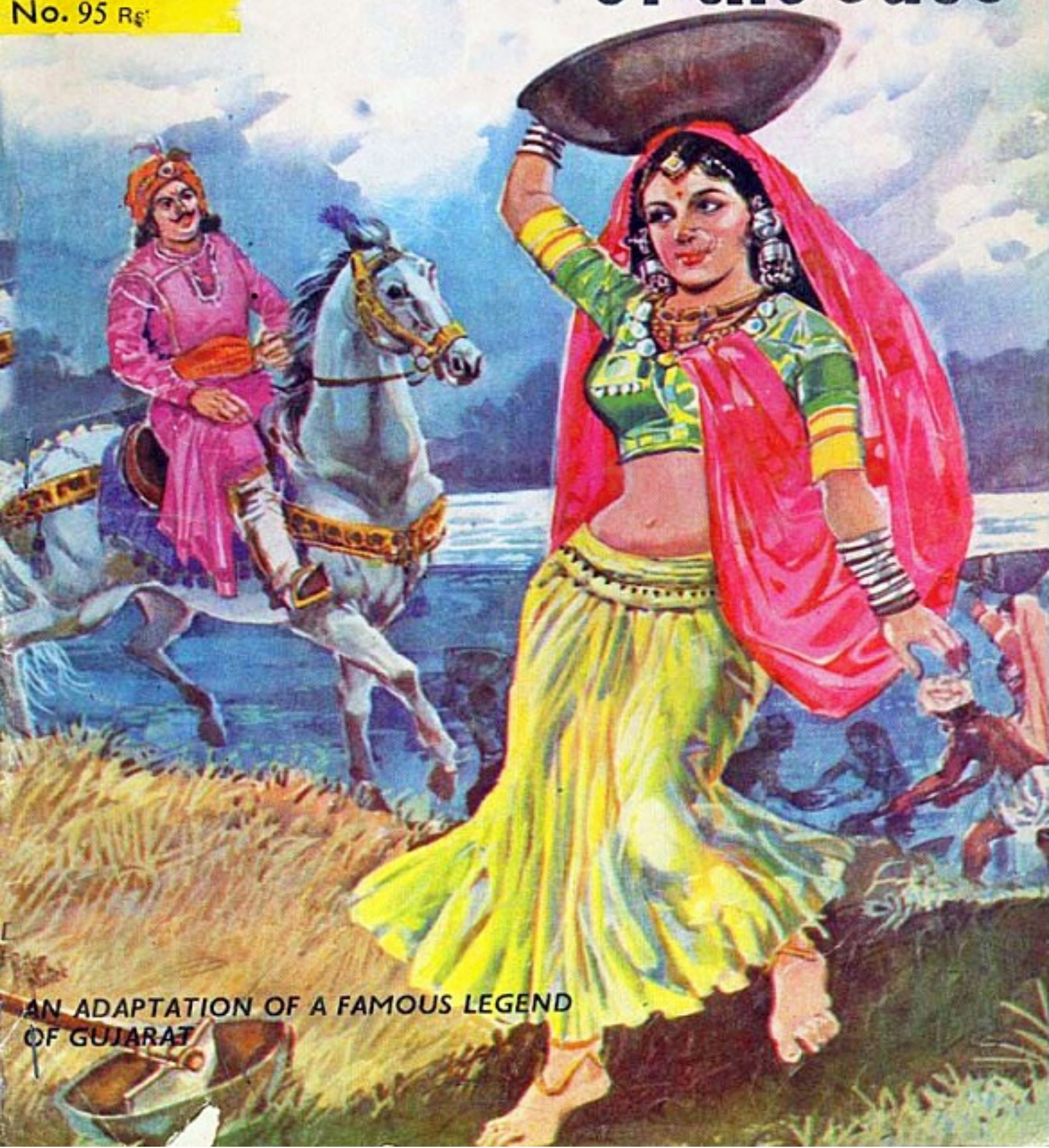




JASMA of the Odes



AN ADAPTATION OF A FAMOUS LEGEND
OF GUJARAT

Jasma of the Ode tribe of Gujarat is remembered for her loyalty to her husband, for her fearless conduct in the face of the might of King Siddharaj Jaisingh and for her love of the rugged life of the nomadic Odes. Many a folksong is sung about her, to this day, in Gujarat and Rājasthan.

According to the legend, in an earlier birth, Jasma was an apsara (celestial nymph) and had been sent to earth by Indra to distract the meditation of sage Nala. The enraged sage cursed her. She would be born in the poor nomadic community of Odes and be forced to marry an ugly man. It was in fulfilment of this curse that she was married to Rupa, the ugly son of Bhalo Bhand.

A wandering bard of King Siddharaj Jai Singh's court chanced to see Jasma and he described what he saw to his king when he returned to the court. The king had to see the dazzling beauty. When he did, he was captivated by her beauty and offered to marry her; to make her the queen of Gujarat. Jasma looked at him in disdain, spurned his offer and rebuked him for having cherished such evil thoughts. This dialogue between the King and Jasma forms, perhaps, the most eloquent part of the folksongs and is sung with deep feeling by the inspired villagers.

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JASMA

OF THE ODES

JASMA WAS THE DAUGHTER
OF NAYAK DALO DHAND, CHIEF
OF THE NOMADIC ODE TRIBE.



WHEN JASMA WAS BORN—

SHE REMINDS ME
OF A JASMINE,
FAIR AND PRETTY
AS SHE IS.

THEN LET
US CALL
HER JASMA.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR JASMA,
HER MOTHER DIED WHEN SHE
WAS JUST A TODDLER.

POOR MOTHERLESS
JASMA. I MUST
MARRY AGAIN AND
BRING A MOTHER
FOR YOU.



DALO MARRIED A GIRL CALLED DALI.

DALI, YOU WILL BE A MOTHER TO JASMA, WON'T YOU?

JASMA — JASMA. I'M SICK OF THAT NAME. I WONDER WHY SHE DIDN'T DIE WITH HER MOTHER.

OF COURSE I WILL, MY LORD. SHE IS NOW MY OWN CHILD.

FROM THE DAY SHE SET EYES ON HER, DALI DISLIKED JASMA AND OFTEN ILL-TREATED HER.

MA, I'M HUNGRY. GIVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT.

DO YOU THINK I'VE NOTHING ELSE TO DO? YOU'RE ALWAYS HUNGRY. YOU'LL EAT US OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME, YOU SHAMELESS CHILD.

AS JASMA GREW UP, DALI'S DISLIKE TURNED INTO JEALOUS HATRED, FOR JASMA WAS EASILY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE ODE TRIBE. SHE SCOLDED HER ALL DAY.



AT THE WELL —



THAT NIGHT DALI SPOKE TO DALO.

WE MUST ARRANGE JASMA'S MARRIAGE SOON. SHE HAS COME OF AGE.



THESE WERE THE WORDS, THE EVIL DALI WAS WAITING FOR.

THIS IS THE OPPORTUNITY. JASMA SHALL MARRY THE CRIPPLE, RUPA. THAT SHOULD TEACH HER NOT TO BE CONCEITED ABOUT HER BEAUTY.



SHE TURNED TO DALO.

WHAT ABOUT MY COUSIN, BHALO BHAND'S SON, RUPA? I CAN GET COUSIN BHALO TO AGREE.



B... BUT RUPA IS A CRIPPLE!

DALO WAS SILENT. DALI DID NOT GIVE UP.

HOW CAN WE EXPECT ANYTHING BETTER WHEN WE HAVE NO DOWRY TO OFFER?



YOU INVITE THEM HERE, I'LL DO THE REST.

FORGIVE ME, JASMA. I AM HELPLESS.

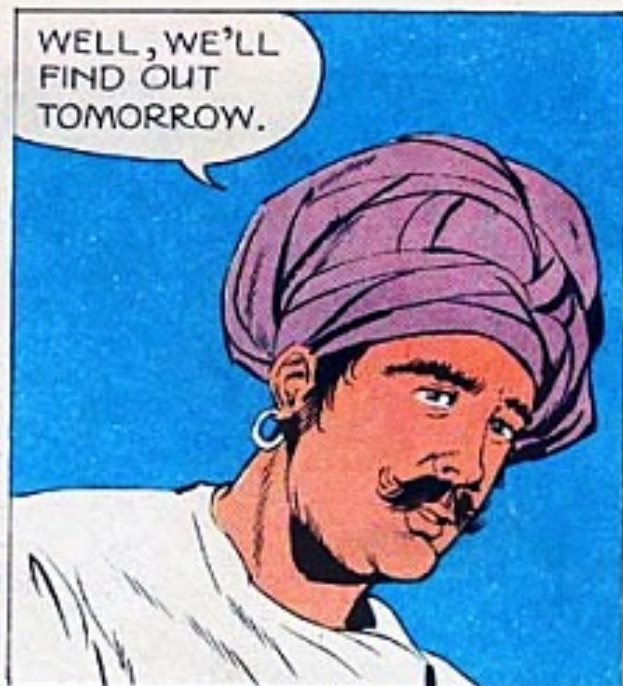


ALL RIGHT. I'LL GO TO BHALO BHAND TOMORROW.



AS DALO WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE —





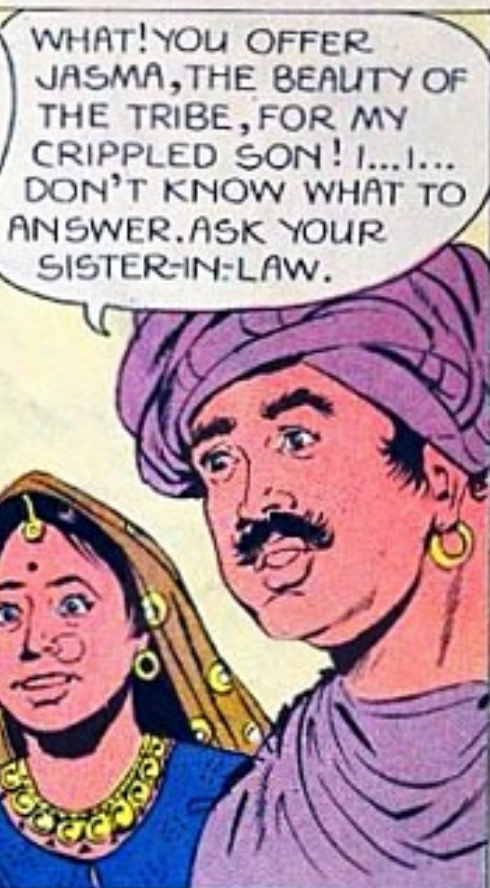


WHERE IS JASMA? THE HUT LOOKS EMPTY WITHOUT HER.

SHE HAS GONE TO GATHER FIREWOOD.



IN FACT IT WAS TO TALK ABOUT HER THAT I CALLED YOU HERE. WOULD YOU ACCEPT HER AS A WIFE FOR RUPA?



WHAT! YOU OFFER JASMA, THE BEAUTY OF THE TRIBE, FOR MY CRIPPLED SON! I... I... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO ANSWER. ASK YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW.

BHALI WAS SHREWD.



EVIL WOMAN. HER INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD. BUT JASMA WILL BE FAR HAPPIER AS MY SON'S WIFE, CRIPPLED THOUGH HE BE, THAN SHE HAS BEEN WITH HER STEP-MOTHER. I WILL NOT LET DALI GET OFF LIGHTLY THOUGH.

SO, WHEN DALI LOOKED AT HER—

HOW MUCH DOWRY
CAN YOU GIVE?
AT LEAST A HUNDRED
HEAD OF CATTLE?

I WOULD GIVE
MORE FOR JASMA,
SISTER. BUT WE
LOST ALL OUR
CATTLE IN THE LAST
FAMINE. WE HAVE
NOTHING TO GIVE.

YOU WILL HAVE
TO GIVE AT LEAST
A FEW HEAD OF
CATTLE OR I WILL
NOT ACCEPT YOUR
DAUGHTER FOR
MY SON.

DALO WAS PAINED BY THE
WHOLE TRANSACTION. HE
TURNED TO BHALO.

COUSIN, YOU KNOW THAT
ALL I HAVE IS FOR JASMA.
I HAVE ONE HEAD OF CAT-
TLE. PLEASE ACCEPT IT
AND LOOK AFTER MY
LITTLE FLOWER.

BHALO WAS MOVED BY DALO'S
WORDS AND TONE.

CATTLE OR NO
CATTLE, JASMA
SHALL
BECOME MY
DAUGHTER-
IN-LAW!

ON THE DAY OF THE WEDDING —



OH GOD! MY
HUSBAND IS A
CRIPPLE! WHAT
A CRUEL
FATE!

SHE CONTROLLED HERSELF, HOWEVER, AND WENT THROUGH THE CEREMONY. BUT THAT NIGHT WHEN SHE SAW HIS FACE CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE BROKE DOWN.



HE'S UGLY
TOO! ALAS!
WHAT HAVE
I DONE TO
DESERVE
THIS?

RUPA'S HIDEOUS FORM, HOWEVER,
HAD A
HEART
OF GOLD.



JASMA, FORGIVE ME.
I KNOW HOW YOU
MUST FEEL. I WILL
TRY TO MAKE YOU
AS HAPPY AS I CAN.
PLEASE DON'T WEEP.
I CAN'T BEAR TO
SEE YOU WEEP.

JASMA WAS MOVED BY HIS WORDS. ASHAMED OF HERSELF, SHE FELL AT HIS FEET.

I AM SORRY, RUPA. I SHOULD ASK YOUR FORGIVENESS. I WILL BE A LOYAL WIFE TO YOU AND WILL LOOK AFTER ALL YOUR NEEDS.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, JIVAJI BAROT, A COURT POET OF GUJARAT, HAPPENED TO PASS BY THE ODE CAMP.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL GIRL! I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYONE LIKE HER.

HE TURNED TO A LITTLE BOY NEAR BY.

WHO IS THAT GIRL?

SHE IS JASMA. NAYAK DALO'S DAUGHTER, RUPA'S WIFE.

JIVAJI WAS SO IMPRESSED BY HER BEAUTY THAT HE COMPOSED SEVERAL VERSES ON HER.

I WILL PRESENT THESE VERSES TO THE KING AT COURT.



SIDDHARAJ JAISINGH, WHO WAS THE KING OF GUJARAT AT THAT TIME, RULED FROM HIS PALACE, RUDRAMAHAL, AT PATAN. HE WAS A GREAT PATRON OF ART AND LITERATURE. WHEN JIVAJI ARRIVED AT COURT —

YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE SEEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN CREATION — JASMA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE CHIEF OF THE ODE TRIBE.

THEN SING OF HER BEAUTY TO ME.



WHEN JIVAJI SANG THE VERSES HE HAD COMPOSED —



A MERE TRIBAL GIRL! YOU CALL HER A QUEEN! IF IT IS AN EXAGGERATION, JIVAJI, I'LL BEHEAD YOU!

IF YOU SEE HER, YOUR MAJESTY, YOU WILL CALL HER A GODDESS.

THE KING'S CURIOSITY WAS AROUSED.

THEN SUMMON
HER TO THE
PALACE.

THE ODES ARE NOMADS,
YOUR MAJESTY, AND
INDEPENDENT OF SPIRIT.
AND TRIBAL CUSTOMS
WILL NOT PERMIT
JASMA TO COME TO
THE PALACE.

BUT I MUST SEE
THIS BEAUTY.

GIVE ME
A FEW DAYS,
YOUR MAJESTY.
I'LL THINK OF
SOME WAY TO
BRING THE
ODES TO
PATAN.

MEANWHILE, THERE WAS A TERRIBLE FAMINE IN SOME PARTS OF GUJARAT.
THE ODES WERE BADLY HIT BY IT AND NAYAK DALO WAS ANXIOUS.

SIR, THE CATTLE ARE
DYING WITHOUT
FODDER.

THERE IS NO WATER
AND ALL CONSTRUCTION
HAS BEEN STOPPED.

OUR FAMILIES
ARE STARVING.

LET US MOVE
TO SOME
TOWN IN
SEARCH OF
WORK.

JIVAJI LEARNT OF THE PLIGHT OF THE ODES. HE WENT TO THE KING.

YOUR MAJESTY,
THE ODES ARE
BADLY IN NEED
OF WORK. IF YOUR
MAJESTY CAN
PROVIDE IT, THE
ODES WILL COME
TO PATAN.

YOU ARE NOT
ONLY A GOOD
POET BUT ALSO
A BRILLIANT MAN,
JIVAJI.



THE KING SENT FOR
HIS MINISTER.

REVIVE THE PLAN TO
CONSTRUCT THE
SAHASRA-LINGA
LAKE. SEND
HERALDS TO ALL
THE TRIBAL
VILLAGES
CALLING FOR
LABOUR.



THE HERALDS SET OUT ON THEIR MISSION.

THE KING IS CONSTRUCTING
A LAKE. COME TO PATAN.
YOU WILL BE PAID GOOD
WAGES FOR YOUR WORK.



THE HERALDS REACHED THE CAMP OF THE PROUD ODES TOO. BUT—

THIS SOUNDS ALMOST LIKE A ROYAL SUMMONS. IF WE GO, WE WILL BE BOWING TO THE WILL OF THE KING. WE WILL NO LONGER BE FREE.

TIMES WILL IMPROVE.

NO!
NO!

WE
WON'T
GO!

BUT TIMES ONLY GREW FROM BAD TO WORSE. AT LAST IN SHEER DESPERATION, THE PROUD ODES MADE A DECISION.

ALL RIGHT. LET US GO TO PATAN. BUT WE WILL CAMP ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL.

ONE EVENING,
DAYS LATER,
JIVAJI RAN
EXCITEDLY TO
THE KING.

YOUR
MAJESTY,
THEY'VE COME!
THE ODES HAVE
COME TO WORK
AT THE SITE.

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, AS USUAL, THE KING RODE OUT TO THE SITE WITH HIS MINISTER AND JIVAJI.



WHEN THEY REACHED THE SITE —

WHERE ARE
THE ODES?

THAT GROUP
WORKING OVER
THERE. THEY ARE
THE ODES, MY
LORD.

THE KING TURNED TO HIS
MINISTER.

BRING
THEIR
CHIEF
TO ME.



SO THIS
IS THE
BEAUTY'S
FATHER.

SO YOU ARE NAYAK
DALO DHAND, CHIEF
OF THE ODE TRIBE.

YES, YOUR
MAJESTY.



WHERE DO
YOU LIVE?

IN THOSE HUTS,
OVER THERE, YOUR
MAJESTY.



WHEN DALO LEFT—

JIVAJI, I STILL
CANNOT BELIEVE
THAT JASMA
HAS THE BEAUTY
YOU CLAIM
SHE HAS.

WAIT TILL YOU
SEE HER. SHE
DOES NOT SEEM
TO HAVE COME
TO WORK TODAY.



THE NEXT DAY, AS THE KING RODE TO THE SITE —

MY GOD! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE! SHE MUST BE A GODDESS.



THE KING RODE UP TO HER.

O BEAUTIFUL ONE, WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

I AM JASMA OF THE ODE TRIBE, YOUR MAJESTY.



JASMA! YES, WHO ELSE COULD IT BE?



DELICATE ONE, YOU REMIND ME OF THE JASMINE FLOWER.

I MAY LOOK DELICATE, O KING, BUT I WORK HARD TO EARN MY LIVING.



SAY YOU WILL BECOME
MINE AND I WILL TAKE
YOU TO MY PALACE!

I'D RATHER
LIVE IN
MY HUT.

COME WITH ME, JASMA. YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK AGAIN. I WILL MAKE YOU THE QUEEN OF GUJARAT.

HA! HA! HA! WHAT
WOULD I DO WITH
A KINGDOM?

HER LAUGHTER MADDENED
THE KING.

IF YOU WILL NOT
COME WILLINGLY,
I'LL TAKE YOU
AWAY BY FORCE.

DON'T
YOU DARE
TOUCH ME.
I AM A
MARRIED
WOMAN.

THEN I WILL
KILL YOUR
HUSBAND.

KILL RUPA AND OUR
TRIBE WILL RISE
AS ONE TO AVENGE
THE MURDER.

THEN I WILL
SLAUGHTER THE
ENTIRE TRIBE...

AND HAVE
POSTERITY
SPIT ON YOUR
NAME FOR
SPILLING INNO-
CENT BLOOD?

THE SPURNED KING RODE AWAY,
BENT ON MAKING JASMA HIS.

I'LL SPARE THE
TRIBE BUT I'LL
KILL HER HUSBAND
AND MAKE HER MINE.

HE SUMMONED THE CHIEF OF HIS GUARDS.

KILL RUPA, THE HUSBAND
OF JASMA, THE ODE,
AND CAPTURE THE
REST OF THE TRIBE.

AS YOU
COMMAND,
YOUR
MAJESTY.

THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS AND HIS MEN RODE OUT TO THAT PART OF THE SITE WHERE THE ODES WERE WORKING.

WHERE IS THAT FOOL, RUPA, JASMA'S HUSBAND? THE KING HAS ORDERED HIS DEATH!



WHEN HE HEARD THAT, RUPA TRIED TO HOBBLE AWAY.

THERE HE IS! CATCH HIM.



NAYAK DALO TRIED TO STOP THEM.



YOU CAN'T KILL RUPA. HE HAS DONE NO WRONG. WAIT...

BUT—



THE ODES WERE PETRIFIED BY THE COLD-BLOODED MURDER. NAYAK DALO WAS AGHAST.



FOR A REPLY THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS
AND HIS MEN TURNED THEIR HORSES...



...AND BEGAN TO RIDE AWAY.



THE ODES GAVE CHASE.





NAYAK DALO NOW BECAME ANXIOUS.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?
WHAT CHANCE HAVE
WE AGAINST THE
WELL-EQUIPPED
ROYAL ARMY?

REVENGE!

WE
MUST
FIGHT.

LET'S
ATTACK
BEFORE
THEY DO!



THE ODES WENT INTO THEIR HUTS AND CAME OUT WITH
THEIR WEAPONS. JUST THEN AN ODE CAME RUNNING UP.



NAYAK DALO GAVE ORDERS.

ONWARD, MY MEN.
WE WILL FIGHT
TO A FINISH.



THE RIGHTEOUS ODES WERE FIGHTING TO A FINISH AND THEY FOUGHT WITH A VENGEANCE.



THE KING'S ARMY WAS NO MATCH FOR THEM. THE SOLDIERS LOST HEART.

AT THIS RATE NOT A
SINGLE ONE OF US
WILL BE LEFT
ALIVE.

LET'S RETREAT BEFORE
IT'S TOO LATE.

WE'VE ROUTED
THE KING'S
ARMY.



WHEN THE COMMANDER OF THE
ARMY SAW HIS MEN RETREAT...



...HE CHANGED HIS STRATEGY.

COURAGE, MY
MEN. SURROUND
THEM FROM
THE REAR.



THE ODES, THIS TIME, WERE TAKEN OFF THEIR GUARD.



THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS ATTACKED BHALO BHAND.

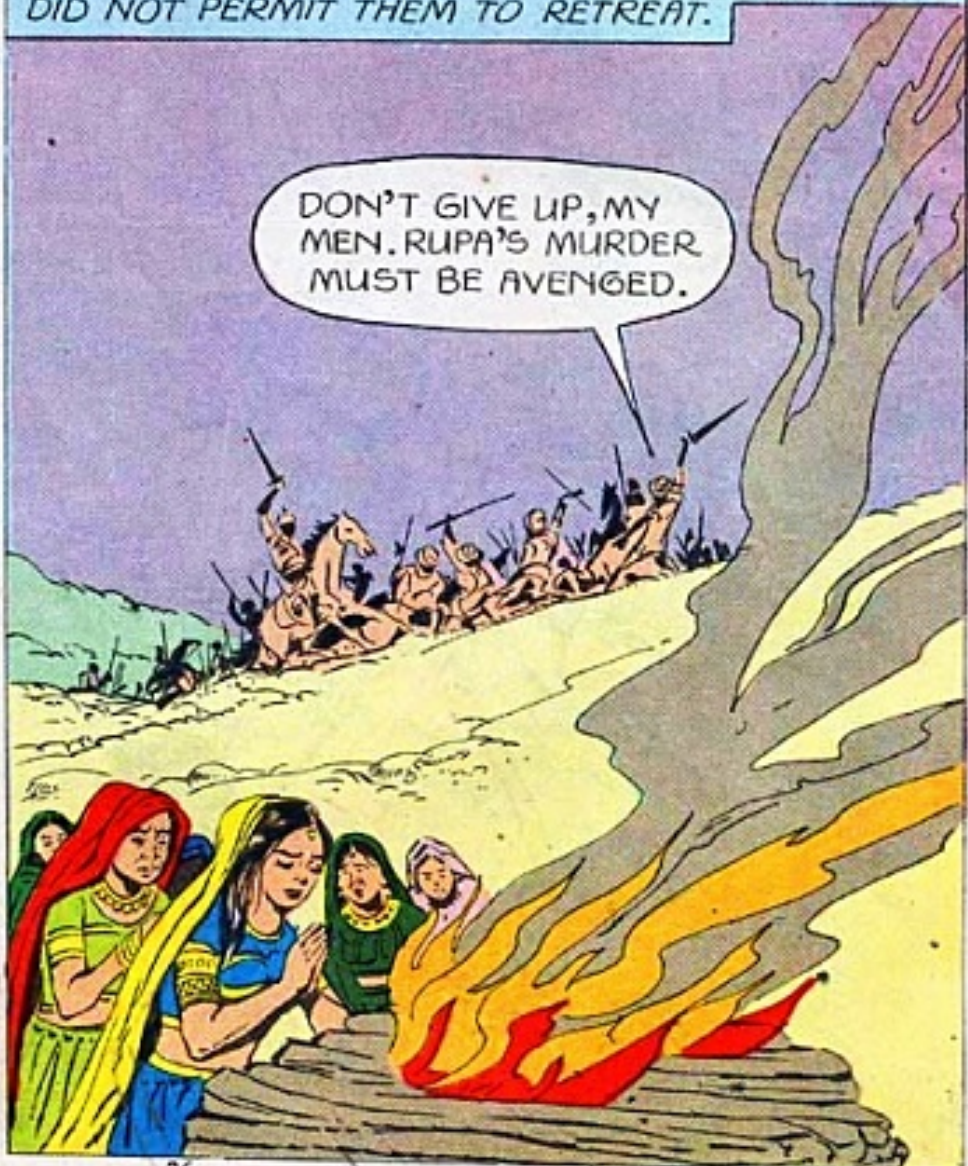


YOU DARE DEFEY
THE ROYAL
ARMY, DO YOU?

AND WITHOUT GIVING BHALO
A CHANCE TO
DEFEND HIMSELF,
HE KILLED THE
BRAVE ODE.



WHEN THEY SAW BHALO BHAND FALL, THE ODES
LOST THEIR MORALE. BUT NAYAK DALO DHAND
DID NOT PERMIT THEM TO RETREAT.



DON'T GIVE UP, MY
MEN. RUPA'S MURDER
MUST BE AVENGED.

WHEN THE COMMANDER HEARD DALO, HE CHARGED UP TO HIM.



THE COMMANDER RAISED HIS SWORD...



...AND BROUGHT IT DOWN ON THE NAYAK'S NECK.



AN ODE RAN TO JASMA.



JASMA REFUSED TO EVEN MOVE.

I AM AN ODE. AN ODE
NEVER RUNS AWAY!
I WILL JOIN MY
HUSBAND.



A CRY WENT UP FROM ALL
THE WOMEN AROUND HER.

SATI
JASMA!

SATI
JASMA! MAY
THE GODS
BLESS HER!



JUST THEN THE KING RODE UP TO THE SITE. SHOCKED BY WHAT
HE SAW, HE TURNED FURIOUSLY UPON THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS.

WHY DID YOU KILL THESE
INNOCENT TRIBALS? I ONLY
ORDERED YOU TO CAPTURE
THEM ALIVE.

THERE WAS NO
OTHER ALTERNATIVE,
YOUR MAJESTY. THEY
PREFERRED DEATH
TO CAPTIVITY.



THE CRACKLING FLAMES
BLARED MOCKINGLY AT
HIM TELLING HIM IT
WAS TOO LATE.

ALAS! I AM DOOMED!
MY KINGDOM IS DOOMED.
THE GREAT KING
SIDDHARAJ JAISINGH
WILL DIE A LEPER FOR
LUSTING
AFTER A
CHASTE
WIFE.



AS THE FLAMES ENVELOPED JASMA-

I AM LALDEV, INDRA'S
MESSENGER. I HAVE
COME TO TAKE YOU
TO HEAVEN.

I WILL NOT
GO WITH YOU
LEAVING ALL
THOSE WHO
DIED FOR
ME BEHIND.



LALDEV WAS STRUCK
BY HER LOYALTY.

THEN I SHALL
BRING THEM
BACK TO LIFE.



ONE BY ONE, THE DEAD ODES BREATHED AGAIN.

FATHER!
UNCLE BHALO!
RUPA! RUPA!



WHEN JASMA SAW HER NEAR AND DEAR ONES ALIVE AGAIN, SHE TURNED TO LALDEV—

GOOD SIR, I AM GRATEFUL TO INDRA, BUT I WOULD PREFER TO LIVE AND WORK AMONG MY PEOPLE FOR A FEW YEARS MORE.

YOU MAY STAY, JASMA. THE DOORS OF HEAVEN ARE EVER OPEN TO YOU. COME WHEN YOU ARE READY.



LALDEV WENT BACK TO HEAVEN AND JASMA TO RUPA AND HER BELOVED TRIBE.



MANY, MANY YEARS LATER, SHE DIED. AFTER HER DEATH SONGS WERE COMPOSED ON HER AND TEMPLES WERE BUILT IN HER MEMORY.



A BED TIME STORY



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